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177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo (large Haoussa knife); a manyanko (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

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177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554]
[435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

Chapter 1. The Country and Its Inhabitants

142 Although the Mossi is not a handsome type of Black, there is nothing disagreeable about him. He is rather tall, with lively eyes, woolly hair, flat nose, occasionally rather fine features, lips which are broad without being too thick, and cheeks heavily marked with three parallel lines running from the temples to the chin and a fourth leading perpendicularly from the nose to the other three. His limbs are muscular, and his color neither ebony nor copper but an intermediate hue.

291 He acquires a truly attractive and resolute air when he dresses in festive clothes, with his broad, dark blue, Zouave-like trousers, his loose shirt made of white and blue fabric strips which falls lightly over the arms, and on the right shoulder his doré, a weapon consisting of a slightly bent iron rod, flattened at one end and terminating at the other in a ring hafted perpendicularly to a short stick. His wrist is often adorned with a copper bracelet, and he nearly always carries at his waist a stiff knife, enclosed in a leather sheath which ends in a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. He wears a cap made of two diamond-shaped pieces of colored fabric half-sewn together; the two free ends may serve to cover the ears and cheeks, but are usually worn raised in the shape of a tiara. A great fighter, he wields the knife with dexterity or strikes with the doré which can become a dangerous club.

173 The Mossi are a conquering people. They have not always lived in the territory they now occupy. But where did they come from?
648 The elders questioned all say that their people came from Gambaga
643 (British Gold Coast), and this is why the Moro Naba Wobro took refuge in Gambaga when he was dethroned by the French conquest; this is also why the naba of Gambaga is notified whenever a Moro Naba dies, and why the shoes, cap, and scepter of command of the deceased are sent to him as gifts to be laid on the ancestral tomb. Gifts are also sent to the naba of Fada N'Gourma, which the Mossi call "Bingo." When the Moro Naba dies, his bow and quiver are presented to the

70| When a chief assembled his men, no one stayed behind. Only the
 72| women, children, invalids, and old men guarded the villages. Those
 [411] who had no horses formed the infantry; they were armed with bow
 and arrows, usually poisoned, and a large sword hung from the shoulder.
 The horsemen carried a sword and a spear that rested on the tip of
 the foot and was held at mid-height with the right hand. The Mossi
 [643] cavalry was especially numerous and fearful. The Moro Naba stayed
 home when his people went to war. He gathered together as many
 horses as possible, and, when horsemen lost their mounts, they came
 to him to get another horse and rejoin the fight.

669 The last wars before the French conquest of Koupéla, which we
 shall describe briefly, were civil wars that took place either between
 the people of Tenkodogo and those of Koupéla, or between the Mossi
 and the Gourmantché.

669 /12/ As generally happened in parallel cases, these wars followed
 643 the death of a naba, when several pretenders wrangled over the suc-
 cession. It was in order to prevent such wars that only the immediate
 entourage of the naba was informed of his death. Outsiders were to
 remain in ignorance and believe the naba to be ill in his hut. The
 fatal news was spread only when the head of the family had gathered
 all that was necessary to honor the deceased in proper fashion by
 celebrating the kouré. (5)

5. Kouré, funeral ceremony in honor of the dead. See below.

669 When Naba Kidba died, leaving only a child of five or six to
 succeed him, a man from Kazem'bouanga who was powerful by
 virtue of his wealth and the number of his men decided to seize the
 throne. His followers had taken for themselves the name of Kazem'-
 bouanga and used to say: "Although the hyena (katré) is not the
 equal (zéma) of the donkey (bouanga), she nevertheless attacks and
 kills him if she meets him in the bush: similarly, although we are
 not as powerful as the inhabitants of Koupéla, we will manage to de-
 feat them." And indeed, they marched on Koupéla. The prime
 minister, who bears the title, Saman'Naba (head of the outer court-
 yard), and whose own name was Wenkosgaraga, seized the child
 and fled with him to Sapara, the nearest village under the direct
 authority of the Moro Naba, located nine kilometers from Koupéla.

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put
in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded
with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the
threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a
gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the
handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," men-
tioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every
member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished
weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let
the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives
a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some
for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may
not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
582 men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads.
At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed
with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars
1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
343 smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with
a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as
a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the
inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while
the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with
dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day.
The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for
hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive
flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which
borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so
crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thor-
oughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba,
buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wé' naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

224 These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and
389 saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and" [23] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

The season we are now studying is the time of large-scale hunting. Several villages get together and set a date and a meeting place.

1 [i.e. February-April]. - Analyst

224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

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224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year. Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are most difficult to ford.

[48]
[see February-April.-August]

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documentation on this matter is not extensive enough to enable us to attempt a comparative study."

Marc do not base themselves exclusively on this argument. They also use a tradition of the Mossi themselves, and it would doubtless be unwise to reject it without examining it further. An argument that could be cited in favor of a very ancient occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi is Binger's following remark: "The Mossi must have remained in contact with the Touareg /Tuareg/ for a fairly long time (2) ... since they partially adopted their dress and use, as they do, the catch-handled *[poignée en croix]* ~~saber~~." [71/41]

2. In this quotation, I have omitted the word "after," since Binger assumes that the Mossi, after taking Timbuktu in 1326 by order of the Mali, remained there until 1433, having, therefore, one century of contact with the Touareg. In reality, the Mossi stayed in Timbuktu only a very short time, and this raid could not have given them a prolonged contact with the Touareg from whom they were separated before the fall of Timbuktu, and again as soon as they left the town, by the entire Songhai country stretching along the banks of the Niger River. On the contrary, if they had formerly occupied Djerma, before the Djermabé or the Songhai, one can easily understand this contact with the Touareg as well as the existence of the sword with the short crutch-handle *[poignée en croix]* (Binger wrongly calls this straight sword a saber). In addition, when Binger speaks of the Targui /Tuareg/ dress, adopted in part by the Mossi, he doubtless thinks of the *lithâm* (or face veil) which was then worn by the Mossi horsemen. At the present time, they are no longer worn, and I have never seen them among the Mossi, where I lived 1908-1909. [291]

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method.

Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. [435] As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now. [411]

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

326 Mossi blacksmiths make ouaka, koutiaga, axes, knives, daggers, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, razors, iron bracelets for women, men, nobles, spoons, horse bits, stirrups, spurs, etc. [435] They also make needles of considerable thickness which are worth 10 cowries apiece, or five for 1 sou.

During the winter season, they hardly make anything beside ouaka.⁷ During the dry season, they make all the other items.

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326 They also make zandé, or clubs with iron tips. Let us say a word about clubs, which are in a way the Mossi national weapon. A Mossi would believe himself dishonored if he were not to bear a club solemnly on his right shoulder wherever he goes. Even small boys carry them, proportioned to size, and they do this with no less solemnity than their elders.

Mossi clubs are of three kinds:

1. Some made wholly of wood, handle and body both, and carved all of one piece. They are called dori.
2. Others whose handle is made of wood, but whose head consists of a large round stone imbedded at the tip of the handle. These clubs are called gougou.

3. Finally, the clubs with a wooden handle and an iron mallet inserted perpendicularly at the tip of the handle. These are the zandé or zann'dé. Sometimes the handle is covered with hide, and this makes it richer and more handsome.

326 Blacksmiths make only the iron part of the zandé. The other kinds of clubs are made by the owners themselves.

Blacksmiths only make zandé on order. While they make ouaka and koutiaga in advance and have them taken /514/ to market in quantities, they only make zandé when someone comes and asks for one.

The Mossi blacksmiths, therefore, work sometimes on order and sometimes to build up their stock. They sell this stock at market through their children, just as their wives go there to sell the pottery they manufacture.

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413 The tools used by Mossi blacksmiths are as follows:

1. A small anvil called kissiguiré, with a pointed iron piece underneath, which can be held in the hand or thrust into the ground.

$\frac{2}{3}$ [i.e. A kind of large hoe, see p. 32. — Analyst]

102

WARFARE

634 3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.²⁴

721 The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding
643 expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba
644 felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

701 Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the
721 provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often
644 members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent
[202] orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or
[278] without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the *Strophanthus* species. Some
[411] of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the
[177] Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide
[714] shields.

As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded
701 either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they
726 became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For
[648] example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

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The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.¹³

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

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[p. 178-8]



Mogho Naba Sagna II (1942-57), who was instrumental in reuniting the Mossi people into one territory, the Upper Volta.



The Mogho Naba's daughter, the Napoko, impersonates her deceased father at his funeral ceremonies. Note that she wears one of his robes, his slippers, and his bonnet, and has his sword behind her.

11: Skimmer E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28, Mossi FA28



Nguho Naba Koungri's warriors, many bearing traditional weapons, respond to their sovereign's call for aid against the new French administration.

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[p 178-G]

140 13. Binger, I, 18, 440.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 469-70.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 467.

19. Marc, p. 36.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 4835.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 4836.

25. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, p. 4850.

[704] 28. Marc, p. 38. He attempts to maintain historical veracity: "Contrary to what was believed, the Mogho Naba was able to assemble thousands of horsemen with which to confront the French."

29. Monteil, p. 163.

30. He gives an account of the northern region of Ghana in a secret report quoted in Wolfson, p. 199.

31. "Les Missions Françaises dans La Boucle du Niger," *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, VII (1897), 108-9.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, V (1895), 276. The people of Nobere say that Alby went to the ruler's son at Djiba and asked to be taken to Ouagadougou because he had presents for the Mogho Naba. But the prince, noting the soldiers with the European, secretly went to his father and told him about the mission. Mogho Naba Wobogo then called his ministers together and asked them whether the visitor should be received. They told him that they feared this visit was a trick to capture the country, and told the Djiba Naba to tell his guest that Mogho Naba Wobogo did not want any Europeans in his kingdom.

34. Marc, pp. 35-38. See "Les Missions Françaises dans La Boucle du Niger," *Bull. du Comité de L'Afrique Française*, VII (1897), 107-12, for a discussion of the controversy between the European powers for control of these territories.

35. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 109.

36. Barry, p. 131.

37. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 111.

[411] 38. Noll, p. 257. The Mossi were a bit chagrined that a relatively small force conquered them. This force consisted of Lt. Voulet, his adjutant Lt. Chanoine, Sergeants Laury and Le Geriel, 29 Senegalese infantrymen, 10 spahis, 180 Sudanese infantrymen armed with European weapons, 40 Sudanese horsemen, and 250 porters. The Mossi now insist that although this force was small, it had more fire-power than they had ever encountered, and that they had only flint guns aside from their traditional weapons. They say that if they had had rifles, no one would ever have entered their country.

39. Archives, Document 15G-190 (June 1897).

40. Noll, p. 257.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 39 ff.

44. It is not clear whether Mazi was poisoned (as the French claim), or whether he died a natural death. Despite French claims to the contrary, the Mossi insist that Mazi was never ruler of Ouagadougou, and they do not include him in their genealogies. The present chief of Nobere insists that Mazi was never Mogho Naba and that he died a natural death. Dim Delobson also declares that although Mazi was Wobogo's sworn enemy, and would have liked to become Mogho Naba, he was ill when Voulet called upon him and died before acceding to power. (Dim Delobson, pp. 41-42.)

45. Lambert, p. 73.

46. Archives, Doc. 15G-190 (May 1897). The Nobere people deny that they supported the French, but official documents of the period report that it was the Nobere Naba who informed the French of Boukary Koutou's activities. The people of Nobere

14. *Ibid.*, p. 450.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 460.

18. Von François, p. 143 ff.

20. Crozat, p. 4820.

22. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.

41. Dim Delobson, p. 38.

43. Randau, p. 433.

9. Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga*, he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

443 shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his
 651 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
 626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
 441 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
 571 which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
 571 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some
 forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or
 woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while,
 were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some
 571 handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
 571 are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons
 who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market
 for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel,
 or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and
 when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor
 and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the
 market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see
 them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
 571 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
 576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of
 greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them
 correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the
 persons involved: Young girls on passing each other on one of their
 innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and
 place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then
 will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation
 they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls
 and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but

571 invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women some-
 571 time kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when ad-
 571 dressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send
 them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man
 who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medi-
 571 cine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She
 571 may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However,
 571 when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he
 571 is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are
 equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in
 age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status
 man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When